A Diſsertation
On "Mania"

Submitted to the Examination of the
Revd.
The Trustees & Medical Faculty of the University
Of Pennsylvania —
For the Degree of Doctor of Medicine;
On the A.D. One Thousand eight
hundred & Eleven —

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"Canst thou not minister to a mind Diseased?"
Shakespeare

What Disease can be greater? What Disease can more require the serious attention of the Physician, than that which robs Man at once of his prerogative, the noblest gift of nature, the attribute of Reason?

Man labouring under other Diseases, which if the powers of his nature are inadequate to overcome, finds in Death, a relief for all his misery; not so however, with him afflicted with Mania; he is obliged to "groan & sweat under a weary life" a burden to himself & all around him, deprived of that, which makes life valuable, the conversation of friends, the exercise of Reason — Mania, like Death, pays homage to neither the Delicacy of sex, nor the gorgeous palaces of the Rich; but seizes alike upon the imperial wearer of the Diadem, as well as the humble peasant of Plebian Rank — The Affluent as well as Indigent, fall victims to its Ravages — There can certainly be no Spectacle more affecting than a fellow being in this situation, for altho' his pulse be not fast ebbing to Diſsolution, nor his frame shattered by corporeal Disease, yet

being deprived of Intellect is (I say) a sight infinitely more affecting than were he afflicted with all the infirmities of body — For, who can behold the noblest the most beautiful work of the Creator roam about careless of himself, the world, & its inhabitants, alike insensible to the ardent rays of Summer, & frigid blasts of Winter, with nought (save form) to elevate him above the brute Creation, without deploring the degradation of our nature? The most hardened Stoic could not I am confident without dropping a tear for humanity —

It has been urged, (but I think too rashly) that the victims of this dreadful malady are incapable of relief; that the Disease when once taken root is difficult, nay impossible to be eradicated — Were this the fact (but I trust it is not) we then should only have to mourn at their fate, & deplore the imperfection of our Knowledge: For to say at once that the Disease is incurable, & to consign a fellow being to a hideous dungeon immediately as he is affected, telling him, or friends, that there is not the least ray

of hope that he will ever again be himself (without making endeavours to effect it) is inhuman, & therefore unbecoming the Character of the Physician -

Can the Medical Philanthropist behold the poor Maniac thus neglected, without enquiring the Cause of the neglect? The reason is this: That under other Diseases the afflicted vents his grief in groans & tears but it being the property of the madman to make no complaint, is therefore passed, unnoticed & unregarded - It is the duty of the healing art & should be the Opinion of every one Engaged in its practice that no Disease is incurable, & that even Mania which truly has sometimes baffled the skill of the Physician, may be cured - I shall therefore in this Essay point out that mode of treatment which has been found most proper, & which if not sufficient to completely "raze out the written troubles of the brain" may at any rate be productive of temporary benefit

From the first promulgation of Medical Science to the present time the Disease of Mania has been considered as one of the greatest calamities to which our afflicted nature is subject; is it then to be wondered that it should still continue to excite the attention of the Medical Philosopher? Dr. Cullen & other writers place the proximate cause of this Disease in the nervous System; but it appears that the Disease is not seated in the nerves from the fact that Hysteria, Epilepsy &c. diseases evidently nervous not being attended with mental derangement; And that it is a Disease of the arterial System the learned & Ingenious Professor of the Institutes has plainly shewn, from the causes, Symptoms & cure of Mania being the same as those of other Diseases, which all admit to be seated in the bloodvessels —

Is there in Pleurisy a pain in the part affected? This is also frequently the case in Mania - Is there in Pleurisy a full, quick or tense pulse? The same may be felt in Mania. Is there in Pleurisy frequently a dissolved state of the blood? The same occurs frequently in Mania —

Further, that it is a Disease of the Bloodvessels may be inferred from the remedies which cure the one curing also the other —

In no Country of the world has Insanity of the melancholy type been more prevalent than in England & hence it has almost universally obtained the name of the "English Disease" & Dr. Cheyne has written a Book expressly on the "English Malady" - Why the natives of that Country should be particularly liable to this Disease, may perhaps be a very difficult question to determine. Is it the effect of Climate? Is it because their Royal Master was deprived of Reason that they through reverential Sympathy are so likewise? Or may not their oppressive government by relaxing the minds of its Subjects tend to produce this melancholy fatuity?

Whether this or either of these queries be founded in truth the latter of which seems somewhat probable can be of but little practical utility to the Physician -

The Symptoms which characterize this formidable Disease are Delirium; severe pain in the head; loud roaring; violent exertions of strength; absurd incoherent Discourse; unaccountable malice to certain persons, particularly to relatives & friends; diminution of the irritability of the body with regard to the morbid effects of Cold, Hunger &c. with a full strong pulse —

The causes of Mental Derangement are many; the following however may be enumerated as the Principal viz Hereditary predisposition; abuse of Spirituous liquors; violent & stimulating passions of the mind; abstruse study; unlimited exercise of the faculties; tumors compressing the brain —

The abuse of Spirituous liquors has been enumerated as a cause of this Disease, & were it the only one, the consequence of this potent poison, I would think it sufficient to deter for ever, the votaries of Bacchus from the Bottle - Drunkenness is nothing less than a temporary fit of insanity; this is inferred from beholding in the Drunkard all the symptoms of the maniac they differing only in Degree - they are both too, Diseases transmitted from Father to Son — no one I am sure will hesitate to pronounce the passions as prime agents in the production of this dreadful malady. Love, all invincible Love, rising to desire so potent & universal in its sway upon the frame of man that neither the Edicts of Religion, the Proximity of Death, nor the convulsive trembling of the Earth could prevent, or even abate the ardour, of be-

venereal gratification — We are told, in the yellow Fever of '93 in Philadelphia, this passion was indulged in the presence of the "dying & the Dead" — When desolation was extending her hideous pinions over that City, threatening it with an extermination of its Inhabitants, there were many, who instead of preparing for a State of futurity, were, by the unlawful indulgence of this passion, ~~were~~ heaping more sins upon their heads — Virgins we are also told were deflowered, when an Earthquake lay Desolate the flourishing City of Lisbon — In these cases I suppose that the potency of the passion had paralyzed as it were the Reason, nay completely produced an alienation of the mind of man: For it is almost incredible to suppose that there existed no Morbid action in their Brains, when acts of this kind were Committed under such Circumstances as related.

Joy, with the other stimulating passions in a proper Degree pervades the whole body of man producing universal vigour, imparting vivacity to the Indolent & diffusing over the most pallid Cheek the glow of Health — Instances are not rare however, of unexpected good fortune producing a total derangement

Of Mind: It is an admirable Cordial - But like Spirituous ones & every thing that poſseſses energy, may under Circumstances be productive of injury: For we know things productive of good, will, if carried beyond certain limits produce injurious consequences; So of Joy, tho' salutary in moderate Degree, has when carried to exceſs, produced Mania nay even Death -

Historians inform us of many Instances of the fatal effects of this paſsion - Pliny tells us that Chilo the Lacedemonian died in consequence of hearing that his Son had gained a Prize in the Olympic games - "Cum Victoria filio Olympiae expiraſset gaudio" Valerius Maximus relates, that Sophocles the Tragedian died in consequence of hearing that a Decision was given in his favour - And Livy, mentions the Instance of an aged Matron, who whilst she was in the depth of Diſtreſs from the tidings of her Sons having been slain in Battle, died suddenly in his Arms in the Exceſs of Joy, upon his Safe Return - In these Cases had not the stimulus been exceſsive it is probable that neither Mania nor Death would

have taken place but some morbid action of leſser grade: For I suppose that the Operation of Causes in the production of Mental Derangement to act through the medium of the Circulation that being increased by these stimuli, must neceſsarily occasion a greater afflux of this Vital Stimulus to paſs to the brain & there by reducing the Excitability of the System below, & thereby raising the excitement of the System above the healthy point, either to produce Mania, or if, in an exceſsive Degree immediate Death - as was the Case in the above Stated Instances - Abstruse Study; unlimited exercise of the faculties; tumors compreſsing the brain &c: all act in the same way - Physicians are divided in Opinion, whether men of Genius or those of only mediocrity in talents are most liable to this Disease - It has been remarked that Poets and all who suffer their Imaginations to wander without restriction are particularly liable to the Disease in question - And Indeed, what can approach nearer to the "reveries of Lunacy" than

the following description of the Poet - "The Poets Eye, in a fine frenzy rolling doth glance from Heaven to Earth, from Earth to Heaven, & as Imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown; the Poets pen turns them to Shapes & gives to airy nothing a local habitation & a name" - Nor does Dryden seem to have been unaware of the analogy existing between wisdom & mania - for in the following couplet he observes:

"Great Wits are sure to madness near allied
And thin partitions do their bounds divide"

And the same thing appears in the Scriptures in the address of Festus to Paul "Much learning doth make thee mad" —

I shall in the next place proceed to the treatment or mode of Cure. The Indications for which are two -

1. To gain a perfect Command over the Maniac
2. To diminish the morbid or preternatural excitement of the brain - The first indication is to be effected by gentle & conciliating means - But more frequently by inspiring the Patient with Dread or fear of Coercion. Humanity - however, should always be Kept in view,

for upon gaining the Confidence of the Maniac, in a great measure depends the after treatment of the Disease -

2. Indication - 1st By Ven: Section. Bleeding in this Disease is no modern Remedy; But Bleeding in sufficient quantity, is. We do not hesitate to draw blood "pleno rivo" in Pneumonic affections to the extent of fifteen or twenty ounces - Why should not the same Remedy be used to the same extent in Mania? Is the brain of less importance to the healthy state of man than the lungs? If not; Why then should this noble Remedy be thus neglected. We should not consider the number of times we have used the Lancet nor the quantity of blood we have drawn; but should be governed altogether by the force of the pulse & other Symptoms of the Patient -

2:ly Remove the Patient from his friends to a place of con=finement, should the paroxysm come on when the patient is from home, apply the mad shirt; the less however this is used the better -

3. Solitude has been highly recommended -

4. Darkness ought sometimes to accompany Solitude in the first stage of the Disease; perhaps some advantage may arise from keeping the patient standing 24 hours -

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5. Low diet & that altogether vegetable should be enforced.

6. Drink should be nothing but water, For all Kind of Spirits are highly injurious —

7. Vomits have been recommended; but they are injurious unless ven: section has been previously used —

8. Purges are highly useful; the Drastic & mild have both been recommended the former has been preferable. Calomel & Jalap ten grains of each two or three times a Week has been given with great advantage —

9. Blisters to the Extremities here they tend to equalize excitement & consequently ought to be applied to the wrists or ancles in the first stage of the Disease; but in an advanced stage when morbid excitement is much reduced, they may be applied to the head & neck —

10. Cold Bath - this is an excellent remedy for by its sedative operation it diminishes the excitement of the brain -

11. Cicuta Digitalis &c have been advised but their efficacy is (I believe) very Doubtful —

These then are the principal Remedies to be relied upon in the Cure of this formidable Disease; their quality & quantity must be regulated according to the state of the System— By their proper administration, I am confident many have been restored to themselves, their Families, & Society— But should they all prove abortive; & the afflicted still remain in a hopeless state of Derangement, we then may truly say—

'Tis hard: But Patience must endure,
And sooth the woes we cannot Cure.—

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